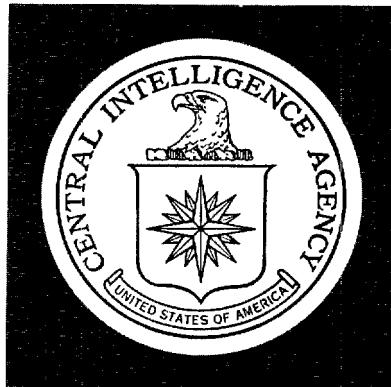


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Czechoslovakia-USSR: Prague leaders believe lack of
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¶ Czechoslovakia-USSR: Prague's leaders believe that a lack of unity within the Soviet presidium accounts for the relatively indecisive nature of Soviet action since the invasion.

Czechoslovak government officials contend that this explains the postponement by the Soviets of another confrontation with the Czechoslovak leadership in Moscow. According to Radio Warsaw, the latest "opinion" in Prague is that such a meeting will take place, but not before the "first half of October." The uncertain timing does imply that the Kremlin has yet to agree on its next move.

Other than mentioning that they believe ideologue Mikhail Suslov is their "best friend" in Moscow, the Czechoslovaks were not specific concerning the alleged differences among the Soviets. They suggested, however, that the stumbling block for Moscow is the united front presented to the Soviets by the Czechoslovak leadership.

According to the Czechoslovaks, the basic dilemma facing the Kremlin is how to remove Dubcek and other Czechoslovak leaders. The Soviets reportedly oppose the Czechoslovaks holding a party congress, knowing that the delegates would re-elect the Dubcek leadership. If the Soviets forcibly remove Dubcek, however, no Czechoslovak leader would accept the position of first secretary from Soviet hands. Dubcek, Smrkovsky, Premier Cernik, and President Svoboda have made clear to Moscow that they will either all remain in office or all resign together.

Slovak party leader Husak, who allegedly is the Soviets' leading candidate to replace Dubcek, stated on 28 September that conjectures concerning disputes within the Czechoslovak leadership are "inventions," although he did admit some differences in outlook exist. Husak's statement probably was intended to lay to rest allegations that he has been working against Dubcek.

(continued)

[The Czechoslovaks continue to delay in implementing fully or permanently the provisions of the Moscow agreement, in part at least because they hope that changes, which will redound to Prague's benefit, will take place in the Soviet leadership.]

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